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Security Council

Fiftieth Year

Provisional

3583rd Meeting

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New York

President:	Mrs. Agnelli	(Italy)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Di Tella
	Botswana	Mr. Merafhe
	China	Mr. Qian Qichen
	Czech Republic	Mr. Vondra
	France	Mr. de Charette
	Germany	Mr. Kinkel
	Honduras	Mr. Urbizo Panting
	Indonesia	Mr. Alatas
	Nigeria	Mr. Ikimi
	Oman	Mr. Al-Khussaiby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Kozyrev
	Rwanda	Mr. Bakuramutsa
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rifkind
	United States of America	Mr. Christopher

Agenda

The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations

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The meeting was called to order at 12 noon.

Adoption of the agenda

The President: Members of the Council will recall that the date and agenda for this commemorative meeting of the Security Council were agreed upon by members of the Council in its prior consultations. In accordance with that consensus, the provisional agenda for this meeting is before the Council in document S/Agenda/3583. Unless I hear any objection, I shall consider the agenda adopted.

The agenda was adopted.

The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations

The President: I am very pleased to acknowledge that at this commemorative meeting of the Security Council the following members of the Council are represented by their Minister for Foreign Affairs: Argentina, Botswana, China, France, Germany, Honduras, Indonesia, Italy, Nigeria, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. The Czech Republic is represented by its First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs. Oman and Rwanda are represented by their Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

The spirit of cooperation demonstrated by all those present here, which has made this very important meeting possible, is greatly appreciated by all of us.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I call on the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: It is my great pleasure to welcome you today to this ministerial meeting of the Security Council of the United Nations. It is also an honour for me, Madam President, to greet you on this historic occasion — historic for two reasons: First, it coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of this Organization. Secondly, this is the first time that, at the ministerial level, a woman has presided over this body. This is an affirmation of the essential role that women must play at the highest level of international diplomacy. It is gratifying that this takes place so soon after the Conference on Women in Beijing, which was itself a landmark.

This gathering of Ministers responsible for the conduct of the foreign affairs of States in every region of the world is significant. To have so many distinguished individuals here is a welcome and impressive event. I express my gratitude to all of you for your presence.

Given the complex world in which we live, meetings at this level are necessary. They help strengthen this organ, which today more than ever is playing the role envisaged for it by the Charter.

Every great conflict of history has been followed by a time of reconstruction and transformation. New ways of solving problems need to be found. Here in this Chamber lie the responsibility and the privilege of seeking to shape the future under vastly changed international conditions.

Experience over the past few years assures us that this task will not be easy. Patience and determination will be required. Cooperation is essential. Concepts must be re-examined. Institutions will have to be reformed. New approaches will have to be adopted even as fundamental principles of international relations are maintained.

The Security Council is itself an impressive example of the fact that the structures and mechanisms available to us can adapt and evolve to meet new challenges. In crisis after crisis over the past few years, the distinguished representatives who sit in the chairs you now occupy have been part of a transforming and positive process of change.

The Security Council has been functioning more flexibly, continuously and creatively than ever before. Its work ranges across a far wider spectrum than in the past. Along with its more traditional responses in resolving conflicts, the Council has taken pioneering positions on sanctions, preventive deployment, international war-crimes tribunals, confidence building, and through the many stages of democratization.

The work has often been frustrating. There have been setbacks and there have been successes. But, overall, the example of the Security Council's performance should be an inspiration to all who must face the frequently agonizing decisions of this age of ambiguity and change.

The ever-increasing and varied agenda of the Council has placed new demands on the Secretariat, which itself is adapting to the realities of today's world. As I have repeatedly stated, I am determined that the Secretariat should become more effective in carrying out

the tasks assigned to it by the Council. To this end, the process of reform which I launched at the outset of my term in office is under way and will continue. If we are to meet the challenges ahead, it is essential that the Security Council and the Secretariat should work closely together.

For several years now the Council has succeeded in achieving consensus on most of its decisions. A spirit of cooperation prevails. So, too, the relationship between the Secretariat and the Council has become more interactive and dynamic, and we have to continue to work together in order to improve our methods and our actions.

(spoke in French)

It is in this framework that I wish to say once again that the implementation of peace-keeping operations is for me a subject of genuine concern, particularly because at present Member States owe the United Nations more than $3.4 billion.

The operations in the former Yugoslavia alone cost approximately $4.7 million per day. The current situation compels us to limit our action and to take drastic measures for the future. This, in my view, has two consequences, the importance of which must not be underestimated.

The first is a financial consequence. It is leading the United Nations to reject for purely monetary reasons actions that would none the less be politically desirable. In a way, each of our peace-keeping operations is carried out at the expense of others. Hence, we risk allowing financial constraints to overtake political necessities.

This brings with it a second consequence that is no less serious, because it is an ethical one. The United Nations runs the risk of being constrained in its choice of operations on the basis of criteria and reasons that run counter to the principles of universality and equality contained in the Charter. Some conflicts are in danger of being forgotten for reasons that have nothing to do with the suffering they cause but, rather, because they take place in regions to which the world pays less attention. The United Nations thus runs the risk of being accused of following two sets of criteria, of using a double standard in choosing its actions in the service of peace.

I am sure that all of you here are well aware of all that. Your presence here today demonstrates in striking fashion the importance that you all attach to the multilateral diplomacy of the world Organization. This is for me a source of encouragement, and it must be for every people and every nation a real reason for hope.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his kind words addressed to me.

I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, His Excellency Mr. Ali Alatas.

Mr. Alatas (Indonesia): I deem it a distinct privilege to be able to participate in this special meeting of the Security Council in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. It is indeed fitting that the Security Council should mark this milestone in our Organization's history with a special observance.

My delegation wishes to commend Italy for convening this significant meeting of the Security Council at the Ministerial level. It offers us a unique opportunity for sober reflection on the Security Council's performance since its inception, as well as on ways to further enhance its efficacy.

It may be recalled that the United Nations was born while humankind was still recoiling from the horrors of the Second World War. The international community, "determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", endeavoured at the San Francisco Conference, 50 years ago, to create an international Organization that would be able to prevent such calamities in the future by establishing the political, economic and social conditions for a new, more peaceful and safer world. An important part of that task, the maintenance of international peace, was entrusted to this Council.

The high hopes that the international community invested in the United Nations, however, were soon overcast by the shadow of the cold war. The lofty intentions of the United Nations Charter could no longer be fully realized in a world split into two rival military and ideological blocs locked in a struggle for dominance.

In this Council, a sense of higher responsibility and common purpose among its members had been presupposed, but time and again the Council would be paralysed precisely because the major Powers could not achieve unanimity. As a result, the Council too often failed to take decisive action to resolve conflicts, and its resolutions were frequently defied or ignored. The superimposition of East-West rivalries on the

deliberations of the Council rendered even unanimously approved resolutions unimplementable.

But it cannot be denied that even during the cold war era, the Security Council did manage to bring about some measure of global stability by limiting the scope and intensity of conflicts. Working with the Secretary-General, the Council provided modalities for conciliation, mediation, good offices, fact-finding, truce observation and quiet diplomacy. Time and again the Council would formulate guidelines for the solution of complex problems and substitute dialogue and negotiations for armed hostilities.

With the end of the cold war, a new era in the search for peace has dawned. Breakthroughs have been achieved in long-standing conflicts in some countries and regions. On a number of occasions in the recent past, the permanent members of the Security Council have recognized the international responsibilities inherent in their status and have shown a capability for united action never seen before. We are thus given a glimpse of what the Council could achieve if it could be made strictly faithful to the vision of the United Nations Charter.

Still, the lessons of the past 50 years are clear. We are called upon to further strengthen our institutions and to adopt more effective and innovative approaches to the prevention and resolution of conflicts. We have to recast the Charter's concept of collective action for peace and security so as to render the United Nations more capable of carrying out its primary function. We need to devise a more viable system of collective security in which all Member States can participate in accordance with their respective capabilities. In this way, the burden of making the world better and safer for all will be equitably shared by all. The General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretary-General should assume their respective, complementary roles in preserving the peace, as mandated by the Charter.

Peace-keeping operations have to be armed with a clear mandate and provided adequate means, including financial, to fulfil their missions. Indeed, in this context, it is of critical importance to come to grips with the serious financial crisis that the Organization is facing; otherwise, all our endeavours to maintain international peace and security would grind to a halt. Concepts of peacemaking, peace-keeping, peace-building and preventive diplomacy need to be adapted to the new realities, especially in view of the qualitative changes that have occurred in the nature of conflicts. Questions relating to the future use of powers vested under Chapter VII of the Charter call for a collective re-thinking on the basis of insights derived from recent experience.

The profound changes that have taken place in the course of the past fifty years should now be reflected in the composition of the Security Council. An equitable and balanced expansion of the permanent and non-permanent membership of the Council, coupled with reforms in its working methods and procedures, would render the Council more responsive and relevant to prevailing geopolitical realities and more open to the participation of small and medium-sized States, which constitute the majority of the Organization. It would also be timely and pertinent to review the manner in which the veto is exercised at present, with a view to mitigating its arbitrary use and to ensuring a more democratic decision-making process.

The United Nations may not have been a perfect instrument for peace but it has given us fifty years without a global war and fifty years of experience in the pursuit of peace. Let us look back at the road we have traversed, distil useful lessons from that experience and set out again with refreshed determination. With renewed commitment we can create the world of peace envisioned in the Charter fifty years ago.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia for his kind words addressed to me.

I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Honduras, His Excellency Mr. Delmer Urbizo Panting.

Mr. Urbizo Panting (Honduras) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Permit me to congratulate you, Madam President, on Italy's assumption of the Presidency of the Security Council for the current month. It is a fitting occasion as we commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

The United Nations symbolizes the constant aspiration of men who, with a vision of the future, enshrined in the Preamble of the Charter the purpose of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war; reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human being, and embodied among its purposes the maintenance of international peace and security.

In the time that has lapsed since its establishment, the United Nations has, in our view, achieved important results; among them the avoidance of many military

conflicts, which in other circumstances would have resulted in a worse regional or international conflagration and which would have threatened the very existence of mankind. At the same time it has contributed to the economic, social and democratic development of several Member States. Let us add to these achievements the fact that some countries, once considered enemies, are today part of the United Nations, have declared themselves to be peace-loving, and have accepted the obligations set forth in the Charter.

The Security Council of the United Nations was entrusted with a serious responsibility — that of maintaining international peace and security. While in the early years of its existence, this organ which is such an important part of the international system, was paralysed by a world divided in ideologies, and by the so-called cold war. Today it plays an important role in the area of international peace and security. At present, there are more than 16 peace-keeping operations, covering a vast gamut of conflicts which could endanger international stability.

For Honduras, the maintenance of international peace and security is not an end in itself. Its significance lies rather in laying the foundations for a just and well-balanced system which fosters human development and encourages international cooperation and the development of North-South and South-South economic relations.

Furthermore, the United Nations has successfully carried out activities relating to human development. The recent world summits on population and development, on social development, and on women, held in Egypt, Denmark and China, respectively, are eloquent testimony to the dynamism of the United Nations. We must consolidate these achievements for the benefit of the great masses of people struggling in abject poverty throughout the world, with little hope of overcoming that lamentable state.

That is where the United Nations and the developed world should put forth their best efforts, in order to improve the lot of those who are marginalized and who today constitute the majority of the world's population.

As regards the future of the United Nations, we believe that after fifty years of its existence it requires a thorough overhauling of its operation in order to enable it to better meet the challenges of the coming millennium.

In this context, the Secretary-General of the United Nations was far-sighted when, in his "An Agenda for Peace", he pointed out that the United Nations

> "must never again be crippled as it was in the era that has now passed."

and that in order to prevent conflict and war we must do our utmost

> "to enhance respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, to promote sustainable and economic and social development for wider prosperity, to alleviate distress and to curtail the existence and use of weapons of mass destruction."

With reference to the maintenance of international peace and security, the Secretary-General has also updated the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations by incorporating in his "An Agenda for Peace" the concepts of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and post-conflict peace-building. In this activities, Honduras makes a modest and significant contribution with contingents in Western Sahara and Haiti. We are also favourably disposed to making contributions in this field in other geographical areas of the world where our cooperation may be required.

The fifty years of our Organization are now part of history. The challenge of change which we will face in the coming years is by nature complex and fraught with serious difficulties, but there is no other way. We must assume the historic commitment to accept the challenge and to devote ourselves with enthusiasm to the shaping of a new world, which will do away with political, religious and racial intolerance, which will eliminate inequality and social backwardness, which will establish human fraternity and solidarity, a new world in which the beacon of freedom and democracy will light its path.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Honduras for his kind words addressed to my country.

I call on the Deputy Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, His Excellency Mr. Klaus Kinkel.

Mr. Kinkel (Germany): Madam President, I too would like to express our pleasure at the fact that you, as

the Foreign Minister of Italy, and as a woman, have assumed the office of President of the Security Council.

This special session today manifests our resolve to take stock after fifty years and jointly to look to the future.

The Security Council is the international community's central forum for decisions designed to preserve peace and international security.

Since the end of the cold war, it has recovered from its paralysis. And the challenges facing the Security Council have dramatically increased, but so too have the Council's activities. Well over 400 of its more than 1,000 resolutions have been adopted since 1989. Of course, I am pleased that the one-thousandth resolution was adopted during Germany's presidency of the Council.

Sixty-eight thousand Blue Helmets are at present engaged in 16 peace missions under the auspices of the Security Council. To my mind, this is an encouraging development. It demonstrates the international community's awareness that security and peace can be achieved only through joint action within the framework of the United Nations.

Criticism of the United Nations has become louder in the last few weeks and months — destructive criticism, to my mind. However, what we need is constructive criticism, above all with respect to the Security Council. In view of the criticism we have heard, I feel justified in asking whether anyone knows of an alternative or of an organization better suited to master the challenges facing the United Nations, one that can look back to the same achievements as this Organization can.

Recent developments, however, have placed the United Nations in a very difficult position. The gap between the demands made upon it and the willingness of Member States to provide material and financial support is growing ever wider, and therefore we are faced with hard decisions regarding the future of international peace-keeping. The Security Council must strike the right balance between the obligation to intervene and the need to avoid making excessive demands on the solidarity and on the resources of the international community.

In its declaration of 31 January 1992, the Security Council rightly underlined the significance of the economic, social, humanitarian and, not least, ecological sources of instability. It must increasingly focus its attention on the prevention of conflicts, and in this endeavour it needs the support and close cooperation of the regional organizations. I do not believe that everything has to be taken immediately to the Security Council or to the United Nations. I think that many regional organizations can play a key role and that this is very important for the future.

The Security Council's credibility and efficiency crucially depend on recognition of the Council by the entire international community as the legitimate representative of its security interests. I believe that today there is worldwide consensus on the need to reform the Council. We need a more equitable representation of the Asian, African, Latin American and Caribbean countries, as well as more transparent working methods that would increase the Security Council's operational role and representative character.

Germany, with the support of many Member States, has announced its interest in permanent membership of the Security Council. Our willingness to assume greater responsibility, also within this framework, is for us the logical and consistent extension of our commitment to the United Nations.

Cooperation, networking of interests, joint action in a spirit of solidarity as the basis of global security and development: this is, and will continue to be, our basic foreign policy precept. In this belief, we are committed to European unity. It is also with this objective in mind that we would like to play our part in the Security Council.

The Federal Government is determined to do everything in its power to ensure that this forum can continue, in the decades to come, to fulfil the mandate to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, as laid down in the Charter.

The President: I thank the Deputy Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany for his kind words addressed to me.

I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, His Excellency Mr. Hervé de Charette.

Mr. de Charette (France) (*interpretation from French*): The commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of our Organization would not be complete without a solemn reaffirmation by the Security Council — upon which the Charter of the United Nations confers primary responsibility in this respect — of its commitment to

maintain international peace and security as well as its determination to work, together with other United Nations bodies, to meet the challenges of the next half century.

Allow me at the outset to express France's wholehearted appreciation for Italy's laudable initiative to hold this meeting at the Foreign Minister level. Members of the Council can thus express their views on the system of collective security of the Charter and assess what they have learned from past experiences.

I should like also on this occasion to pay tribute to the work of the Secretary-General of our Organization, whose address before the Council bears witness once again to the will and clarity that animate his efforts to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations.

France has on numerous occasions had the opportunity to present its views on ways and means to expand our Council in order to enable it to better carry out the many difficult missions with which it is charged.

I shall not go into detail with respect to our ideas, but I should like to emphasize France's commitment to support a rapid conclusion to the work of the Working Group of the General Assembly. Two principles will guide France in this undertaking: the necessary effectiveness of the functioning of the Council, which must be preserved, and its indispensable representative nature, which the changes in today's world impose on us.

France has also shown concern to better meet the request for transparency that has emerged without, however, hindering the Council's ability to take rapidly the necessary decisions. That is why my country last year adopted an initiative aimed at assigning the proper importance to public debate in the decision-making process.

At a time when no criticism is being spared this Organization or our Council and accusations of inaction and even impotence are repeatedly being made, we need only, in order to be convinced that the world needs the United Nations, tally up the Organization's accomplishments in settling the conflicts born of, or inherited from, the cold war and the new crises that have emerged in the wake of the collapse of blocs.

A fair assessment should also highlight the irreplaceable contribution of the United Nations: democracy rebuilt in Namibia and Haiti; peace restored in Cambodia; and thousands of human lives saved in the former Yugoslavia. I should like, moreover, to pay tribute on this occasion to the exemplary actions of all personnel who have served under the United Nations flag in peace-keeping or peacemaking operations, which have often taken a very heavy toll in human lives. Nevertheless, tremendous progress remains to be made. Major changes are necessary. The restructuring of the United Nations can wait no longer.

The building of Europe, the primary axis of French foreign policy, bears witness to the energizing nature of historic reconciliations. That is why France lends its support everywhere to the affirmation of solidarity and to regional frameworks.

France believes that the regional organizations, which are encouraged by the Charter to work towards the peaceful settlement of disputes, can make a contribution to international peace and stability, in keeping with the principles of the United Nations.

None the less, according to the very terms of the Charter, adopted 50 years ago in San Francisco, the United Nations remains the only forum for the organization of peace and security at the global level. When a crisis requires a binding solution, the Charter obliges us to go to the Security Council. It is up to the Council, and the Council alone, to decide on measures of constraint or on the use of force and thus give them the legitimacy and expressed will of the entire international community.

May this fiftieth anniversary of our Organization lead us to pay tribute to the successes achieved thus far, but especially to affirm our determination to reform the United Nations and enable it, and our Council in particular, to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. This political will on the part of all the members of the international community will indeed be the best guarantee of the full achievement of the ideals of the Charter of San Francisco.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France for his kind words addressed to my country.

I call on the Vice-Premier and Minister for Foreign Affairs of China, His Excellency Mr. Qian Qichen.

Mr. Qian Qichen (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): At the outset, I wish to congratulate you, Madam President, Foreign Minister of Italy, on your

stewardship of this important meeting at the level of Ministers for Foreign Affairs.

It is of great significance for us on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations to have an exchange of views here on how the Security Council can be more responsive to the new situation and play a more effective role.

In the past 50 years since the founding of the United Nations, and particularly in recent years, the Security Council has played a useful role in easing regional conflicts and promoting the peaceful settlement of international disputes. Summarizing the history of this period, we believe that the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter embody the universally recognized principles of international law. Whenever these principles are observed, the Security Council is able to play its due role. Otherwise, it would suffer setbacks or failures. As an important means available to the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security, the United Nations peace-keeping operations have grown in number, scale and terms of reference in recent years. We believe that in either preventive deployment, dispatch of peace-keeping forces or post-conflict peacemaking, the Security Council must strictly abide by the United Nations Charter and the norms governing international relations, particularly those important principles of respect for State sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of other Member States, peaceful settlement of disputes, impartiality, and seeking the prior consent and cooperation of the parties concerned. Otherwise, instead of achieving the expected positive results, peace-keeping operations would become fruitless and could even become bogged down in a dilemma. Reviewing the practice in recent years, we see that the United Nations operations in Cambodia and Mozambique were successful and that those in Somalia and Bosnia and Herzegovina were not. We need to draw lessons from them.

We always believe that however complicated a dispute between States or an internal conflict in a country may be, we should encourage the parties concerned to seek peaceful solutions through negotiation and dialogue, for this is the only right and effective way to a comprehensive and durable settlement. The practices of imposing sanctions, using military force or even expanding a war in order to stop it are not conducive to a settlement. On the contrary, they will only complicate the situation and add to the difficulties in reaching an eventual settlement.

It should also be pointed out that the regional conflicts in the world today have complex causes. It is both unrealistic and impossible for the United Nations, including the Security Council, to resolve all the problems. Therefore, the Security Council should take into full consideration what the United Nations and its Member States can afford in terms of human, material and financial resources and act within its capacity.

We are in favour of appropriate and rational reforms of the Security Council to enable it better to meet the needs of developments both inside and outside the United Nations. We believe that in addition to enlarging the Council's membership and enhancing the transparency of its work, communication and coordination between the Council and the General Assembly and other agencies should also be strengthened so that its decisions can better reflect the collective interests and common aspirations of all the United Nations Member States. Only in this way can the resolutions and decisions of the Security Council receive broad-based support from the United Nations membership and thus acquire greater authority.

As a permanent member of the Security Council, China supports its efforts to maintain international peace and security in accordance with the mandate entrusted to it by the Charter. As an old Chinese saying goes, "By reviewing the past, one can gain new knowledge". On the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of this world body we hope that the Security Council, by reviewing the past and summing up experience, will better fulfil the lofty duties the Charter has conferred on it on its historic march towards the new century. This is a major test for the Security Council and also, to a larger extent, for the international community's ardent expectation of it. China is ready to work together with other Member States to this end.

The President: I thank the Vice Premier and Foreign Minister of China for the kind words he addressed to me.

I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Botswana, His Excellency Lieutenant-General Mompati Merafhe.

Mr. Merafhe (Botswana): Madam President, we are delighted to see you presiding over this celebratory meeting of the Security Council. Your country, Italy, and Botswana enjoy warm bilateral relations. We are

therefore happy to see a friend at the helm of this august gathering. We congratulate you.

The fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations offers us a unique opportunity to review the Organization's successes and shortcomings and to reflect on what the world body has come to represent for all of us.

The United Nations was founded in the aftermath of one of the most devastating wars in the history of mankind. It was established to, *inter alia*, "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". This objective has largely been realized, to the extent that there has not been an outbreak of a major war in the 50 years of the Organization's existence. Yet, in the same period, local or regional wars have claimed more lives than were lost during the Second World War.

In a local or regional sense, therefore, succeeding generations have not yet been saved from the scourge of war. The conflicts currently raging in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and Sierra Leone, the genocide that was perpetrated against the people of Rwanda last year and the unsettled situation in Burundi, to mention but a few examples, are illustrative in this regard. Lack of success in conflict resolution, however, cannot be blamed on the Organization alone.

The parties to the conflicts, who often fail to heed calls by the United Nations for the cessation of hostilities or even challenge the authority of the United Nations Security Council, must bear the lion's share of responsibility for failure in the maintenance or restoration of international peace and security. Where the parties have cooperated with the United Nations — in Namibia, Mozambique, Cambodia and El Salvador and now in Angola and Haiti, to mention a few recent examples — the results have been resounding successes.

My delegation strongly believes in the sovereign equality of Member States. The importance of each Member State of the United Nations does not lie in how big or small, how rich or poor it is. Rather, it lies in the contribution it makes to the maintenance of international peace and security, to the promotion and enjoyment of basic human rights and freedoms and to economic welfare for all, and, finally, to the progressive elimination of other problems afflicting modern society which make the presence of war and conflict an ever-present spectre in human existence.

The few rich and powerful Members of the United Nations should not use their power to veto the national aspirations, interests and policies of the poor majority. They should instead use this power for the elimination of poverty and for the economic and social uplifting of small and poor States and the poorer sections of society in those countries. Equally, the majority developing countries should not use the power of their numbers to frustrate the national interests of the big Powers, because the result would be an international impasse on issues of crucial importance to mankind.

We are pragmatic and realistic enough to appreciate that total convergence of national interests among the Member States for collective action for the maintenance of international peace and security would be very difficult to attain. This would be so even at the best of times, so long as the nation-State system remains the predominant feature in international relations. We are also fully alive to the fact that the United Nations is not a world government or a super-State. It can act or function effectively only on the basis of whatever authority and titbits of national sovereignty the Member States are willing to cede to it.

In other words, the United Nations can only be as good as its Member States want it to be. Obviously, there is a need to strike a balance between the national interests of the States members of the Security Council and the wider international implications of action or inaction in the light of threats to peace. And this is not an easy task.

In the circumstances, the United Nations Security Council should serve as the crucible for the harmonization and coordination of these national interests and policies in order to ensure that the wider interests of the peoples of the world for peace and security are not compromised.

In situations where there is an absolute need for the derogation of some of the authority of the Security Council to regional arrangements to deter or prevent the aggravation of a conflict, the mandate of the regional arrangements must be clearly stated.

This must include what is intended to be achieved and how, what can or cannot be done without prior consultations with the Council and such other limitations on the mandate of the regional arrangements which would ensure that the authority, credibility and respect of the United Nations are not compromised. It is a matter of the

utmost importance that the United Nations should retain its impartiality in all conflict situations.

The Security Council should never take sides, either by commission or omission, in any conflict, for therein lie the seeds of its undoing: it cannot be both an honest peace broker and a peace enforcer at the same time without compromising the ends of justice and the possibility of a more durable peace in the long term.

Those of us who have emerged from the ashes of a region scorched by the hell fire of racial hatred and political oppression in southern Africa have learned a great lesson: that the freedom of any one country, be it big or small, rich or poor, resides in its affording other countries their own freedom. If this cannot be universally attained, there will be less hope for world peace. As we commemorate this auspicious occasion, let us rededicate ourselves to the lofty ideals which inspired the founding fathers of our Organization and renew our faith in the efficacy of the United Nations, its purposes and principles.

But also in equal measure, let us redouble our efforts to ensure that the Security Council will continue to be responsive to the wishes of a world sick and tired of conflict.

We owe it to posterity to create a world safe for peace.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Botswana for his kind words addressed to my country.

I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina, His Excellency Mr. Guido di Tella.

Mr. di Tella (Argentina) *(interpretation from Spanish):* It is a special pleasure for me to see Italy preside over this important meeting, especially given the deep friendship that unites our two countries based on indelible bonds.

Almost 50 years ago, under the presidency of Australia, the Security Council met for the first time.

The occasion of an anniversary allows us a brief respite in the currently endless activity of the Security Council to attempt to reflect upon what has been achieved and what remains to be done.

The cold war, which indelibly marked these decades, found the Security Council to be one of its most prominent stages. The succession of reciprocal vetoes, the sharpness of the exchanges, the modest scope of many of its resolutions and, above all, its silences in the face of serious crises which affected international peace and security reflected the narrow margin for action available to the Council and the United Nations when set against an overwhelming strategic struggle which shattered the hope for any multilateral solution.

At the end of the cold war, we all perceived that the United Nations had before it a new and perhaps unique opportunity. Barely three years after such a formidable manifestation of hope, a feeling of doubt and a certain concern have crept into our hearts once again.

In the face of uncertainty, one might wonder if this vision of the longed-for opportunity to build a new world order, a more equitable, compassionate and peaceful world order, was merely a mirage.

However, in evident contrast with the past, this Council has not remained indifferent towards situations that directly affect or threaten international peace and security.

The crises in Cambodia, Rwanda, Lebanon, Georgia, Somalia, Mozambique, the former Yugoslavia, Iraq-Kuwait, Haiti, Angola, the Middle East and many other areas are systematically addressed in order to find solutions to just as many human dramas.

Nobody could now argue that this body has been excluded from the review and solution of serious international crises as, unfortunately, was once the case.

Whenever there has been an opportunity for it to participate in the Council, Argentina has tried to make a specific contribution commensurate with the high responsibility conferred by membership of the Council.

So it was in the early stages of the Organization, during the Berlin crisis in 1948. Argentina also participated actively in the solution of other important issues addressed by the Council, including decolonization issues such as the question of Namibia, and the process following the special session held by the General Assembly in 1967 which led to the adoption of Security Council resolution 242 (1967), a decisive landmark in the solution of the Middle East question. In all these instances, and also in the current session, we strive to act

fairly and according to the spirit and the letter of the Charter.

The central role of peace-keeping operations in the work of the Security Council cannot be overlooked. This issue cannot be sufficiently stressed, since peace-keeping operations embody the highest hopes, as well as the legitimate frustrations of many.

Sixteen ongoing operations, 80 States involved and more than 60,000 troops in the field are unmistakable signs of a new willingness and an unprecedented commitment to peace-keeping operations on the part of most Members of the international community.

Nevertheless, there has been some criticism of peace-keeping operations in the light of limited perspectives. In response to those objections and the easy scepticism they harbour, it is always worth stressing once again that the incomparable legitimacy of a multinational force acting on the instructions of this Council is far preferable to other alternatives which, sooner or later, lead to unilateral solutions.

Argentina is supporting the international community in this effort. We have generously contributed more than 9,000 military personnel, equipment, field hospitals, vessels and aircraft which, far from our borders, have proved with concrete action the authenticity of our commitment to the strengthening of the United Nations.

Our participation in peace-keeping operations, which we hereby reaffirm and to which we commit ourselves for the future, is a clear example of the way in which all countries can contribute to this endeavour, involving themselves in the solution of international crises and giving their armed forces a central role in the global process. Peace-keeping operations are pivotal in the efforts towards a genuine system of collective security.

Times have changed, and so have the challenges at hand, challenges which the Council will undoubtedly have to address. International terrorism is one of the scourges in this new international scenario of increasing interdependence and globalization. Nobody is safe from its attacks. Issues and problems apparently foreign to a region of the world suddenly emerge in it with brutal force, taking innocent lives in distant corners of the planet which might mistakenly have been considered safe from these crises.

My country drew the attention of the Security Council to this issue following the occurrence of horrible terrorist attacks. Since then, new and recurrent episodes have only confirmed our fears. International terrorism knows no boundaries, erodes the power of Sates and destabilizes whole regions. It is a challenge that the international community has not yet faced with the determination and cohesion necessary for its prevention and eradication.

Much to our dismay, international terrorism is a new and insidious item on the agenda of international security, which the Security Council cannot ignore.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and related technologies is another new and disturbing development that the Council has to address. In the statement issued by the Council at its meeting at the level of Heads of State and Government held in 1992, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction was rightly considered a threat to international peace and security. However, apart from such an honest definition of the problem, the Council has done little to address an issue defined as a real and present threat.

Argentina has tried to strengthen the role of the Council in these areas through specific initiatives.

In the same vein, we have drawn the attention of the Council to more sensitive issues, such as the illicit traffic of weapons. In our view, only concerted and coherent action on the part of the international community can be an effective antidote to these illegal and potentially destabilizing practices.

Much has been said about the functioning of the Council and how it could be revitalized in the present circumstances.

During its work on the Council, our delegation has consistently promoted changes in the Council's procedures, by encouraging consultations, supporting its missions and establishing greater dialogue between the States that contribute to peace-keeping operations. The aim of all this is to increase both the efficiency and the transparency of the Council's work.

We believe that the fundamental value that must be preserved in this context is the effectiveness of the Council's action, which must be timely and speedy in its response to serious international crises. The Council's action can be strengthened through restructuring only if that restructuring is realistic and based on objective criteria. This is how our predecessors proceeded 50 years

ago, when they endowed the Council with a structure that was suited to the demands of the reality they then faced.

In this context, we need broad consensus so that we can study imaginative formulas designed to increase representativeness. This could be achieved through rotation mechanisms, enabling countries, from all the various regions, that are most active and interested in international peace and security issues to accede to membership of the Security Council more frequently. Such mechanisms would allow the countries that now cannot hope to gain access to the Council for many years to do so more frequently.

Fifty years ago, the United Nations embarked on a journey, determined to build a more just and peaceful world. Today, we recall that almost visionary determination, and we are fortunate to do so in an organization that is vibrant with issues to address and problems to solve, and that is deeply involved in finding solutions to major international crises and increasingly committed to economic development, human rights and social and environmental problems.

Only at the United Nations does success depend on collaboration. Once success is achieved, then it belongs to everyone. Let us preserve and strengthen the efficiency and agility of this forum of peace.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina for the kind words he addressed to my country.

I now call on the Secretary of State of the United States of America, His Excellency the Honourable Warren Christopher.

Mr. Christopher (United States of America): I congratulate you, Madam President, and Italy on assuming the presidency in this very commemorative and important year. It is an honour for me to represent the United States at this kind of important session.

When the Security Council first met on a January morning in 1946, the nations of the world were recovering from war and they were deeply conscious of their past failures to preserve peace. My predecessor Edward Stettinius, who represented the United States at that first meeting, called the United Nations "not a fulfilment, but a beginning" (*S/PV.1, p. 7*). It turned out to be a very challenging beginning because as soon as the pleasantries had been exchanged on that January morning the Council found itself divided over issues like Iran, Greece, and Indonesia.

At critical moments in the years that followed, the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, have overcome divisions, to help us build a more peaceful and more secure world. For example, the United Nations Security Council's stand against Iraqi aggression in the Persian Gulf gave new life to the founding purpose of the Charter. From Cambodia to El Salvador to Mozambique, United Nations forces have helped the survivors of some of this century's greatest calamities to build new lives in larger freedom. Dedicated United Nations personnel have brought food to the hungry in some of the most forgotten corners of the world. They have eradicated infectious diseases and reduced infant mortality around the world. We know and recognize that the United Nations has succeeded in these tasks by combining the strength of individual States while representing the will of the world as a whole.

But the United Nations has evolved and grown in ways that its founders simply could not have foreseen. Its structure and its finances have not kept pace with these rapid changes, and both our structure and our finances are now under immense strain.

The United States has a very important stake and role in a successful United Nations. We recognize that American participation, leadership and support are essential if the United Nations is to be effective. I want to assure you that President Clinton is committed to our meeting our obligations to this Organization, the commitments we made under the Charter.

To sustain support for the United Nations, we must reshape the Organization as if we were creating it anew today. Of course, the United Nations must continue to meet the challenges for which it was created. But as we approach the twenty-first century, the United Nations must also confront the new security challenges of our time: fighting proliferation, fighting terrorism, fighting crime, fighting narcotics, and seeking to arrest the damage to our environment. These threats have taken on new scope in our more interdependent world. They are threats that can be dealt with only on a multilateral basis and, hence, the Security Council has a special responsibility to meet them.

To meet these challenges, the United Nations must become more focused, more efficient and more accountable. It must direct its limited resources to the

world's most pressing problems. Every nation, large and small, has an obligation to ensure that the United Nations sets disciplined and clear priorities, so that our activities in the United Nations will meet our expectations and earn our support. The primary purpose of the United Nations is to save and to lift lives. Certainly with that kind of noble purpose, it cannot afford to waste time or money in that effort.

We must also resolve to maintain and improve the effectiveness of the Security Council. Germany and Japan should become permanent members. Each region should be fairly represented, without, at the same time, making the Council too large and too unwieldy to be effective.

It will take time, of course, to make the United Nations as effective as it must be to meet both the old and the new goals we have set. But that is all the more reason to get started now and to redouble our efforts. Unlike our predecessors on that January morning in 1946, happily we are not fundamentally divided. We also have a half century of experience behind us, and, I believe, a clear sense of what must be done. We can and should expect this year to end with a concrete blueprint for change and a determination to turn our plans into action.

The President: I thank the Secretary of State of the United States of America for the kind words he addressed to my country.

I now call on the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, His Excellency the Right Honourable Malcolm Rifkind.

Mr. Rifkind (United Kingdom): Allow me first to congratulate you, Madam President, on presiding over this historic meeting of the Security Council.

The world in which the United Nations Charter was drafted 50 years ago was very different from the one in which we now live. But the Charter and the Security Council have stood the test of time. They remain central to the management of international relations. Even during the cold war, Security Council resolutions played an important part in efforts to sustain a fragile peace in areas of conflict such as the Middle East and Cyprus, and in pointing the way to just solutions. Peace-keeping operations were mandated, and the concept of peace-keeping developed.

The end of the cold war also made it possible for the Security Council to work by consensus in a way which has transformed its influence and its effectiveness. But the recent emergence of new and very different threats to international peace and security have also presented the Council with new and more complex challenges. Members of the Council have united in tackling the threats posed by international terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and by naked aggression such as that which occurred in Kuwait in 1990.

Nothing has done more to strain consensus than the dreadful war in Bosnia, but the fact that Council members have continued to place a high value on working by consensus has undoubtedly helped to contain the conflict, to prevent the poison spreading into a wider international area and to sustain the hope of peace. In recent years — in Europe, in Asia, in Africa and in Latin America — the Council has faced the problems of States torn apart by civil conflict and complex crises in which the political, military and humanitarian dimensions are inextricably intertwined. It remains the body to which people look to solve the most intractable crises. Despite the criticisms, despite the reverses, the record remains, in our view, overwhelmingly positive.

The management of peace-keeping operations mandated here has stretched resources and placed even greater burdens on the Member States of the United Nations. Few national ministries of defence are as small as the Department of Peace-keeping Operations of this Organization, which has only 300 staff supervising the activities of no less than 70,000 troops in the field. These peace-keepers operate in difficult and often remote and hostile environments. Many lessons, political and operational, have been learned. Nothing would have been possible without the contributions of the troop-contributing Members of the United Nations. The improvements in transparency between Council members and troop contributors are among the most important recent developments in the affairs of the Council.

Britain is proud that it is currently the largest contributor of troops to United Nations peace-keeping operations. The men and women of our armed forces can be found with the United Nations from Georgia to Angola. We are also working with others to develop new mechanisms here, in Africa and in operations in the field which we hope will strengthen the United Nations capacity for conflict-prevention, peace-keeping and peace-building in accordance with the Charter. But, even in this commemorative gathering, none of us can ignore the stark fact that the impending financial crisis of the United

Nations could undermine our collective endeavours. Important Members are not paying their contributions. There has been recourse to the voluntary financing of peace-keeping activities. And troop contributors are bearing the United Nations burden of debt for unfunded peace-keeping and regular budget activities. This situation cannot go on. The day may not be far off when the creditors will revolt. Then who will pick up the cost of the still greater conflict and humanitarian suffering that is likely to ensue? This question cannot be answered in the Security Council, but it needs to find an answer soon.

One other important question hangs over the Council: that of its future size and composition. Britain's position is well known, and I have just reiterated it in the General Assembly. In our view, the productive habit of consensus is related to manageable numbers, and larger numbers do not in themselves guarantee a more representative Council. We support an enlargement of the Council commensurate with the need to maintain its effectiveness. We recognize that certain countries, by virtue of their global interests and their contribution to international peace, should be invited to accept the responsibilities of permanent members. We support the permanent membership of Germany and Japan. There is a need now to move from debate to real negotiation and decisions.

May I conclude by reaffirming my country's continuing dedication, in word and in deed, to strengthening the vital work of this Council and of the United Nations in international peace and security.

The President: I thank the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for his kind words addressed to me.

I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, His Excellency Mr. Andrei Kozyrev.

Mr. Kozyrev (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): It is a pleasure for us to greet the delegation of Italy, which is presiding over this special meeting of the Security Council, because Italy is a country with which Russia has traditionally had friendly relations.

The past 50 years have convincingly demonstrated the foresight of the founders of the United Nations in establishing the Security Council. In the post-confrontational era, the Security Council has played a fruitful role in the settlement of dozens of conflicts. However, the commemorative nature of our meeting compels us not only to pay due tribute, but also to affirm that much remains to be done to improve the effectiveness of the Council's work.

First of all, it is necessary to improve the partnership among the Security Council members, particularly the permanent ones. I should like to assure members that democratic Russia will not abandon its chosen path of achieving its national and state interests, not through confrontation or diktat, but through equal partnership in keeping with its role and responsibilities as a permanent member of the Security Council.

However, attempts to monopolize the settlement of international problems by one State or group of States, and to rely solely on military alliances rather than on a strengthened United Nations, can be as dangerous as the cold war itself to the integrity of the world and the work of the Security Council.

We believe that the Security Council must conduct a thorough analysis of the issue of improving peace-keeping and sanctions mechanisms. Many who have spoken here have raised this issue. Most important is that the decisions taken on such measures and their implementation should not give rise to any suspicion of double standards.

We share the concern expressed in this regard by the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, whom we support. Neither sanctions nor peace-keeping operations should serve as instruments for revenge or the punishment of entire nations. Among the main criteria should be transparent goals, clear conditions and a mechanism for ceasing operations or lifting sanctions. It is obviously high time that we considered broadening the definition of security. This has been made necessary by the realities of the post-confrontational world, which include, primarily, ever-greater threats arising from within States, the effects of major financial and economic crises, man-made disasters, international terrorism and illicit drug-trafficking. I believe that this is in keeping with the ideas expressed on this topic by Secretary of State Warren Christopher before the General Assembly yesterday.

I propose that the Security Council hold a special meeting to compare the views of the member States on new challenges to security. It might also be possible to hold a special meeting of the Council on the problem of international terrorism.

The walls of this Chamber remember the atmosphere of the cold war, in which mutual suspicion and confrontation were predominant. One of the main and most valuable achievements of the Council in recent years has been a new spirit and the new relations among its members. I believe that the Permanent Representatives of our countries deserve praise for that. At times they have held negotiations around the clock here in their search for mutually acceptable and important decisions. We are all responsible for the maintenance of this complex culture of constructive cooperation. That is the task of the next 50 years.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation for the kind words he addressed to my delegation.

I call on the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria, His Excellency Chief Tom Ikimi.

Chief Tom Ikimi (Nigeria): On this occasion when the whole world is joined together as one family in commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, allow me to express to you, Madam President, the appreciation of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for convening this meeting of the Security Council at the level of Foreign Ministers. We commend your country's initiative in bringing us together today, and we feel sure that under your guidance this commemorative meeting will be a success.

Fifty years ago the world emerged from the devastations of the Second World War with the determination to save mankind from the scourge of another war. To this end, the Charter of the United Nations charged the Security Council with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Security Council has, to a large extent, discharged this difficult responsibility with commendable courage.

However, the world, particularly the developing world, has witnessed over 150 civil wars and conflicts which have caused nearly as much destruction as in the two World Wars. The wave of refugees and internally displaced persons, mainly women and children, and the human and material wastage have reached unacceptable proportions.

The recent dramatic changes in the international situation, particularly the end of the cold war, encouraged the hope for a safer and more peaceful world. Regrettably, such expectations have not been fulfilled. However, there are encouraging signs that the capacity of the Security Council to take positive initiatives for the maintenance of international peace and security has discernibly improved as a result of the increasing cooperation between all of its members.

Our collective endeavours for peace could be undermined by the growing tendency on the part of the Security Council to be less willing to stay the course in certain conflict situations, particularly in Africa. In addition, a noticeable fatigue has developed among troop-contributing countries and the major contributors to peace-keeping finances as a result of the multiplicity of United Nations peace-keeping operations.

It is therefore incumbent on all Member States of the United Nations to reaffirm their commitment to contribute to peace-keeping operations. The Security Council must take the lead if it is truly to discharge its responsibility with credibility and strive to give equal attention to all crises that have the potential to threaten international peace and security. In this regard, the United Nations needs to respond positively and effectively to the calls made by West African leaders for financial and logistic support to be given to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in order to implement the recent peace Agreement in Liberia.

Nigeria believes that the Security Council is in urgent need of revitalization and structural reform in order to enable it to respond adequately to existing realities and the daunting challenges which it faces. It is therefore necessary that its membership should be increased to provide more equitable representation. Furthermore, the Council's working methods and procedures need to be improved upon so as to enhance its effectiveness, efficiency, legitimacy and transparency. Africa deserves to be adequately represented in the permanent membership of the Council.

As we observe this solemn occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, let me reaffirm the commitment of the Government of Nigeria to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and to all efforts aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the Organization in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. Nigeria, as a major troop-contributing country and an international peace-keeping nation, is prepared to continue to contribute to the collective efforts of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nigeria for the kind words he addressed to my country.

I now call on the First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, His Excellency Mr. Alexandr Vondra.

Mr. Vondra (Czech Republic): Let me join previous speakers in congratulating you, Madam President, on presiding over this very special meeting of the Security Council.

The United Nations is turning 50, but the idea behind it is much older. Our Organization was established as a consequence of the Second World War and is based on the experience of its predecessor, the League of Nations. It has one clear objective: to rid future generations of the scourge of war. The Security Council was intended to play a crucial role in this effort, having been given the responsibility for maintaining international peace, order and security.

The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations leads us therefore, to reflect not only on the results and the future of the Organization in general, but above all on further improvements in the functioning of this vital organ. Post-cold-war realities in international relations have engendered a cooperative working atmosphere in the Council. They have allowed the Council to become a flexible and effective instrument of the United Nations. The new climate has been full of promises and expectations. It has also, however, brought many new challenges.

We have done our best to meet these challenges. My country is committed to the Security Council's assuming a greater role in various aspects of conflict management and in uncovering the very roots of conflicts. The aim of playing such a role, along with the practice of preventive diplomacy, has been to create the conditions and atmosphere for parties in dispute to enter into serious and sincere negotiations, thus restoring stability and peace in the regions where tension prevails. Active and complex approaches to peace-building and peacemaking have been our primary means of implementing the results of negotiations.

Continuous improvement in information-sharing between Security Council members and other United Nations Member States, enhanced cooperation between the Security Council and the Secretariat, increased transparency of the Council's decision-making and increased and equitable representation on the Council are among the main instruments for improving the Council's efficiency. Much has already been achieved. One very important highway leads us to Security Council reform via the General Assembly. But other very significant routes for improvement are fully within the Council's own competences.

The role of the United Nations peace forces in the former Yugoslavia and the financial crisis of peace-keeping in general are forcing us to completely reconsider peace-keeping. The Czech Republic supports continuously improving the efficiency of United Nations peace-keeping activities. We do not subscribe to one-sided, pessimistic views regarding the results of these operations, but try not to underestimate their shortcomings either.

My Government supports enhancing United Nations cooperation with regional organizations and arrangements on the basis of Chapter VIII of the Charter. The importance of this is closely connected to the increasing participation of regional organizations and the division of labour between those organizations and the United Nations in peace-keeping, preventive diplomacy and other areas, in an effort to create a new international security system. As for such cooperation specifically between the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, my country advocates its increased facilitation.

We support reforming the system of financing peace-keeping operations, which should, above all, differentiate Member States on the basis of objective and clear criteria. The Czech Republic has still not been assigned to any group of Members and thus has not been contributing to peace-keeping funds. Let me assure you, though, that we are prepared to make immediate and full payments of our share as soon as this is formally requested by the Secretary-General.

In a few months, the Czech Republic will complete its tenure on the Security Council. We have reflected a lot on the role of non-permanent members, above all of small countries such as ours.

Logically, the role of such countries in global politics cannot be as significant as that of the permanent members. Nevertheless, the Czech Republic maintains and has been pursuing its own foreign policy interests. While the broad contours of our foreign policy generally coincide with those of other traditional democratic

countries, we try to offer fresh accents, fresh arguments, fresh insights and fresh approaches. Through our work on the Security Council, we have also demonstrated that the Czech Republic does not focus on European conflicts alone, to the exclusion of crises elsewhere in the world, even if their connection with our immediate foreign policy interests is not readily apparent.

We hope that while working on the Security Council we have not disappointed those many friendly Member States that voted for our election. We have been doing our best to improve the transparency of the Council, to improve communication between Council members and non-members, and especially with troop contributors, and to represent, to some degree at least, also the stance of other small and medium-sized countries. These are general themes which we hope all non-permanent members will pursue in the future.

The President: I thank the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic for his kind words addressed to me.

I call on the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Manzi Bakuramutsa.

Mr. Bakuramutsa (Rwanda) (*interpretation from French*): I wish to congratulate you, Madam President, on presiding over this meeting of the Security Council. Your country's neutrality and your presidency provide this body with the serene atmosphere and more human feeling that it often needs. Thank you for that.

The Rwanda delegation is joining the community of nations in commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. In acceding to membership of this Organization, Rwanda wished to join other countries of good will to bring about peace and security in the world.

The great success of this Organization is that it has allowed the nations of the world to meet, to exchange views and to engage in dialogue.

We wish to pay tribute here to the countries which, after the Second World War, took the initiative of putting together this world Organization, which is an ideal forum for all the nations of the world.

While the world has succeeded, thanks to the existence of this honourable institution, in avoiding other world wars, in the third-world countries it has not succeeded in avoiding hundreds of conflicts among its Members and sustained by its Members. After 1945, wars were transferred from the Northern Hemisphere to the Southern Hemisphere.

During this century, a third vicious and spectacular case of genocide has just occurred, in Rwanda, a Member State of this honourable Organization. The Secretary-General of the United Nations denounced it — we are grateful to him for that; the Security Council opted to withdraw its peace-keeping forces; and the rich countries showed their people, thanks to television, the direct killing of innocent civilians.

Those who masterminded this genocide have been rewarded by the Member countries of this august Organization, signatories of the Convention on Genocide. Given illegal protection, they were fed, housed, cared for, trained, and militarily equipped so they could return to power in their country by force. Conferences are now being prepared to facilitate that task for them.

In this regard, Madam President, I take this opportunity to thank your country, on behalf of my Government, for having given help to the children who were wounded and traumatized during that massacre. I also wish to thank, on behalf of my Government, the countries that have taken concrete measures to help the Rwandan people — the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, Ireland, Spain, to mention only those countries.

"Ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia and Herzegovina is now encroaching upon the heart of Europe. The more groups created to solve the problem, the more soldiers sent to halt the damage, the more "ethnic cleansing" flares up.

Africa was a victim of world politics for five centuries. First it was emptied of its population and then it suffered under the yoke of foreign Powers. Before it could catch its breath, it was caught in the crossfire of the cold war between the East and the West. Since the cold war ended, the observable trend has been towards the marginalization of this continent.

So long as there is no equitable justice for everyone in the world, there will be no peace and security. So long as there is no social and economic development equitably conceived for all, peace and security will be vain words, empty of meaning.

After 50 years of operation, the United Nations needs to pause, review its goals and revise its programmes. Since the end of the cold war, the need to reform and revitalize the United Nations has become an overriding imperative. It is important for the United Nations to be restructured to meet the aspirations of Member States, in particular the developing countries which benefit the least from it.

With regard to the Security Council, there must equitable geographical representation in it through an increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent seats. In this restructuring of the Council, Africa must have some permanent seats, with all the relevant rights and duties. This is a right owed to that continent and not a privilege.

The Security Council has a great need for internal democratization and for greater transparency both among its members and *vis-á-vis* other organs of the United Nations.

I would like to conclude by recalling once again that justice and development are key elements if peace and security are to reign in this world. That is the *raison d'être* of the United Nations, and it is the only wish that the delegation of the Rwandan Government expresses in this regard.

The President: I thank the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations for his kind words addressed to me and my country.

I call on the Permanent Representative of Oman to the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Salim Bin Mohammed Al-Khussaiby.

Mr. Al-Khussaiby (Oman): At the outset, allow me to convey my sincere congratulations to you, Madam President, and to your friendly country, Italy, on presiding over this important Security Council Ministerial meeting. I would like to take this opportunity to convey to your Excellency, the honourable Foreign Ministers, and the representatives of the Security Council member States, the warm greetings of my Minister, His Excellency Mr. Youseuf Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah, the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Oman, along with his best wishes for the successful conclusion of this meeting. Had it not been for prior engagements, he would have been amongst us here today.

My delegation would like also, Madam President, to acknowledge the excellent work and able leadership of your Ambassador, Paolo Fulci, who has led the Security Council's activities this month and the discussion that resulted in the consensus on the important presidential statement to be adopted today at this Ministerial meeting under your wise leadership.

The United Nations was founded 50 years ago in order to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which had already brought untold sorrow to mankind. On this basis, the international community emphasized in the Charter of the United Nations the principles of basic human rights, justice, coexistence and the non-use of military force, which should be observed at all times and costs. These objectives can be brought about only by fostering sound international cooperation, in the best interest of economic and social development for the benefit of mankind.

In this context, and in order to pursue these objectives, the United Nations system and other specialized agencies have been strenuously working together towards achieving the noble objectives enshrined in the Charter of this Organization.

The Security Council, the body primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, has played a significant role in these undertakings, a role which, lately, has expanded in quality and quantity to the point that it has made peace-keeping not only an acceptable international mechanism but also an indispensable tool for resolving many conflicts throughout the world. The United Nations peace-keeping forces have played a remarkable role in Namibia, El Salvador, Cambodia and Haiti, to give but a few examples.

Despite the success of the United Nations peace-keeping forces, the many obstacles and stumbling-blocks that have stood in the way of the successful discharge of the forces' mandates, in for example Somalia, Rwanda, Liberia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, clearly attest to this fact. In the light of these difficulties and of the financial constraints the United Nations faces today at one of the most critical junctures of its existence, we believe that it is the duty of the international community to learn from past experience and to utilize the capacities of some of the existing regional organizations with greater determination and commitment to resolve the outstanding issues, in accordance with the purposes and principles set forth in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations. This would necessitate, as a paramount principle that should be observed at all times, that the Security Council

should conduct a thorough study and review before it establishes any peace-keeping operation, as such operations should be engaged in with the clear-cut consent of the parties concerned with regard to time limits, objectives and mandates and within the capabilities and resources of the United Nations organs concerned.

With regard to preventive diplomacy, we believe that the "Supplement to 'An Agenda for Peace'", prepared by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, contains many elements that are helpful to the current discussion on the revitalization and restructuring of the role of the United Nations in peace-keeping. Furthermore, we are of the view that the statement made on 21 February 1995 by the President of the Security Council with regard to that Supplement, along with the statement made on transparency and coordination between the members of the Security Council, the Secretariat and the troop-contributing States, are steps in the right direction aimed at enhancing the work of the United Nations, in strict compliance with its Charter.

The peace we all aspire to, as set forth in the Charter, has not yet been achieved. In the Middle East, in spite of the fact that the Arab parties and Israel have turned to dialogue and negotiation after many decades of war and hatred, the much-awaited peace has not materialized, particularly on the Syrian-Israeli and Lebanese-Israeli track, and progress is still lacking, though we remain hopeful that the dynamics of the ongoing peace process will enable it to clear all the hurdles that might stand in the way of establishing a just and lasting peace in the region. Israel, which occupies Arab lands in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon, must assume full responsibility in ensuring the success of this process, which is based on resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) and on the principle of "land for peace". Along the same lines, international efforts to help Iraq through its current crisis have suffered a major set-back as a result of the Iraqi Government's reluctance and its concealment of much important information from the Special Commission until recently.

In this context, we should remind ourselves that collective security is not restricted to military conflicts; other dangers, such as terrorism, fanaticism and extremism threaten international peace and security. These negative phenomena have one objective: to destroy the principles of tolerance and the rule of law. Our commitment to collective security, as called for in the Charter of this Organization, should be enlarged to deal with such phenomena in order to allow nations to carry on with their economic and social development.

The sweeping changes and challenges that we have witnessed recently in many parts of the world necessitate a collective response from all of us. Our high-level meeting today provides an opportunity to exchange views in this venue in order to address and deal with these new challenges that pose a threat to international peace and security.

In confronting these new challenges, whether through resolving longstanding regional problems or through bridging existing economic and social gaps, it is imperative that the United Nations focus its efforts, now more than ever, on finding the needed solutions and compromises. We believe that this international Organization has the potential and the capacity to do more, which would enable it to fulfil its expected role. We understand the difficulties that might face the United Nations, but these can be eased through our collective efforts to restructure this Organization and to seek new and cost-effective means that will spare it from becoming involved in every issue, large and small, around the globe.

My country believes that all Members of the Organization should rise above their differences and shoulder their responsibilities in order to show their true intentions and stand for a common peace that will take the United Nations into the twenty-first century, in which sustainable development will become integral to all nations in the search for a peaceful, secure and bright future for succeeding generations.

The President: I thank the Permanent Representative of Oman for the kind words he addressed to my Ambassador.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy.

Let me begin by paying homage to you, Mr. Secretary-General, for the exemplary way in which you lead and serve our Organization.

From the moment Italy entered the United Nations, it has dedicated its greatest political and diplomatic efforts to the achievement of its goals. My country fully realizes that the best way the nations of the world can be heard is by strengthening the role of an Organization in which all nations are represented. Today, with the tearing down of the Berlin Wall and the end of the cold war, Italy applauds the more dynamic role that the United Nations, and especially the Security Council, is playing.

Italy has contributed concretely to this role of maintaining international peace and security by frequently participating in United Nations peace-keeping missions, multinational forces authorized by the Security Council and operations conducted by regional organizations at the request of the Security Council.

As this Organization prepares to chart the course of its second half-century of life, it must draw on the courage it so often summons for international emergencies to address instead its own internal situation. If we are to pay homage to the principles enshrined in the San Francisco Charter, we must reform our Organization to bring it into step with changes both in the world and in the increased membership of the United Nations. Moreover, the final goal of the reform identified by the General Assembly — a more equitable and representative United Nations — must be reflected in the process by which we deliberate, choose and effect reform.

In this context, Italy has presented an original proposal for the reform of the Security Council inspired by the principles of democracy, transparency and equitable geographical representation of all Member States while preserving its efficiency and effectiveness, a proposal which is aimed at satisfying and reconciling the aspirations of all Member States.

At this critical juncture in time, we must meet, undivided, the challenges of the present and the future. Together, we must continue our efforts to shape a better world for all nations and all peoples.

I resume my function as President of the Council.

Following consultations among the members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

> "The Security Council has met on 26 September 1995, at the level of Foreign Ministers, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and to exchange views on the challenges which the Security Council faces.
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> "Since its establishment the Security Council has played a crucial role in the maintenance of international peace and security on which development and cooperation among nations are based. The past few years in particular have been ones of momentous change, bringing fresh hope and new challenges. Operations mandated by the Council have assisted in the restoration of peace and stability to countries long-plagued by war. Although such operations have largely been successful, there are areas where success has not been achieved. The Council must continue to spare no effort in working for the maintenance of international peace and security, and build upon its experience of past and existing operations.
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> "The Security Council recognizes that the challenges facing the international community demand a resolute response, based on the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. The members of the Security Council consider that the United Nations must be strengthened and revitalized to help meet these challenges. They take note of the conclusions of the Working Group of the General Assembly on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and other Matters Related to the Security Council, *inter alia*, that the Council should be expanded, and that its working methods should continue to be reviewed, in a way that further strengthens its capacity and effectiveness, enhances its representative character and improves its working efficiency and transparency; and that important differences on key issues continue to exist. The Council also believes that effective use should be made of instruments for preventive action, and the Organization's capacity to conduct effective peace-keeping operations should continue to be improved. The Council will continue to attach utmost importance to the safety and security of all who serve under the United Nations flag in the field.
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> "The members of the Security Council reaffirm their commitment to the collective security system of the Charter. On the solemn occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the Council, along with other United Nations bodies, commemorates what has been achieved so far, but also commits itself once again to the maintenance of international peace and security for which it has primary responsibility, and to working to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/1995/48.

The Security Council has thus concluded its business for this commemorative meeting.

The meeting rose at 1.55 p.m.